



October 16 — Secure It Before You Grind It

Observed an employee grinding plates at the back table in the shop. It did not appear as though the plates were being clamped down when being ground. This could lead to potential hand injury or struck by injury.

The employee was done grinding by the time I reached him but when asked, he admitted that he had not been clamping the plates. I asked if he would from now on, to avoid injury, and he agreed to do so.

Learning: Control the Work Before You Control the Tool

When grinding a plate, the focus can easily go to the grinder itself guard position, PPE, sparks, and where the wheel is contacting the material. But the setup of the material being ground is just as important.

In this observation, an employee was grinding plates at the back table without clamping the plates down. The work was already complete when the observer reached the employee, but the conversation confirmed that the plates had not been secured during grinding.

A plate that is not secured can move when the grinder makes contact with it. Even a small amount of movement can change the position of the workpiece, affect how the grinder contacts the material, or cause a person's hands to be closer to the moving tool or workpiece than intended. The observation specifically identified the potential for hand injury or struck-by injury.

The conversation afterward provided an opportunity to reinforce a simple step: secure the material before starting the work. Taking the extra time to clamp the plate helps keep the workpiece where it belongs and allows the employee to focus on controlling the grinder rather than trying to control the material at the same time.

Good preparation doesn't have to be complicated. Before putting a grinder into the material, look at the setup and ask: Is the piece secure? Can it move? Where will my hands be if it does?

A few seconds spent securing the work can help keep the tool, the material, and your hands under control throughout the task.

Hazards

- Unsecured material moving during grinding
- Hand injury
- Struck-by injury
- Loss of control of the workpiece
- Hands positioned near moving or shifting material

Words of Wisdom

The grinder isn't the only thing you need to control. Secure the material first so you can keep your attention on controlling the tool and completing the job safely.

Pause and Think

- Is the material securely clamped before I begin?
- Could the piece move when the grinder contacts it?
- Where will my hands be if the material shifts?
- Am I trying to hold a workpiece that should be secured?
- What can I do before starting to make the job easier to control?

Closing Thought

Secure the work before you start the work. When the material is controlled, you have a better chance of keeping the tool and your hands under control.

See Something • Say Something • Do Something